



News Release

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ABORIGINAL STUDENTS NEED MORE HELP: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) The Ministry of Education has not made substantial progress toward its goal of improving the academic achievement of Aboriginal students, and it has not made sure that school boards have effectively implemented the strategy devised to meet that goal, says Auditor General Jim McCarter in his 2012 *Annual Report*.

“The Ministry’s most recent data shows that only 45% of Grade 10 students who identify themselves as Aboriginal are accumulating enough credits to be on track to graduate from high school. This is far below the 74% of the general Grade 10 population who were on track to graduate,” McCarter said today after the Report was released. “All school boards need to be on board if improvements are to be made.”

In 2006, the Ministry identified Aboriginal education as a priority, with a focus on closing the gap in academic achievement between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students by 2016. Data from the 2006 census indicates that only 62% of Aboriginal adults in Ontario had graduated from high school in 2006, compared to 78% of the general population. The academic achievement gap was even greater for young adults aged 20–24.

To address the gap, the Ministry created the Aboriginal Education Office, and in 2007 designed a strategic policy framework to help identify Aboriginal students, develop support programs and assess their progress.

Following are some of the Auditor General’s other significant findings:

- Five years after the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework was released, the Ministry had not assessed its progress for any of the 10 performance measures included in it, nor has it required school boards to evaluate and report on the measures. None of the three boards the Auditor General’s Office visited had done so.
- The Ministry has a guide to help school boards develop policies for students to formally identify themselves as Aboriginal so that funding and other support can be better targeted and progress can be tracked. However, fewer than half of the estimated number of Aboriginal students in Ontario had self-identified at the time of the audit.

-30-

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